MEMORIAL OF MRS. H. A. WEIR.

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Memorial of Mrs. Hanna A. Weir

MEMORIAL

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OF

Mrs. Hanna A. Weir,

WIFE OF

JAMES W. WEIR.

Thomas Hastings Robinson

PRINTED FOR THE FRIENDS.

THEO F. SCHEFFER, PRINTER, HARRISBURG.
1872.

Services

HELD IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MARKET SQUARE,
HARRISBURG, PA., FEBRUARY 15, 1872,
ON THE OCCASION OF THE

FUNERAL

OF

Mrs. Hanna A. Weir.

The memory of one so loving and so beloved needs no such perishable record as the brief memorial which follows, to preserve it; yet affection would gather every memento it can of the precious life that has passed from us; that in the fragrant remembrance of it, our own lives may be nourished in the love of all goodness, and in the faith of our unseen Saviour.

Services.

AFTER a brief invocation, by the Pastor of the Church, Rev. T. H. Robinson, D. D., the following anthem was sung by the Choir:

Rest, spirit rest,
In Heaven blest.
Thou art fled to realms of endless day,
In Heaven blest,
By warbling choirs of seraphs led.
Soar, spirit soar away.
Rest, spirit rest.

Address by Rev. T. H. Robinson, D. D.

There is something peculiar in every kind of bereavement, something that separates it from all other modes of trial. It produces its own peculiar state of feeling. It conveys its own distinct lessons to the soul. The death of a child, and the death of an aged man, waken their peculiar emotions. The loss of a wife, the companion of our life, the sharer of our joys and sorrows, the sympathiser in all trials—the loss of a son, who we hoped would be our staff and stay in old age—the loss of a father, the counselor and guide of our youth—of a mother whose affection

brightened all our young dreams, and deepened to the last—each one of these bereavements has its own sad lessons for us; each one touches its own peculiar chord in the soul. It is a part of our discipline here to gather up these lessons and treasure them in our hearts.

Sorrow is part of our earthly heritage. Christianity has been called "the religion for the sorrowful." It is only the religion of eternity that has no sorrow in it. It is only Heaven where all tears are wiped away. Piety here walks amid ruins, and it must weep. Religion is born amid sorrows, and walks amid them through all this vale of tears. Christ threw a radiance around sorrow, when among the first of his words to men He said, "Blessed are they that mourn." Sorrow—it is found in the haunts of sin—in the homes of the rich and the poor—in the heart of the good and the bad. Sorrow—if there were none at all in the world, the beauty of souls would be gone. Sorrow—if there were any at all in Heaven, all its glories would be dimmed. Sorrow—we would not be free from it while we are here. We would be sorrowless only in Heaven. Sorrow darkened the spirit of the Son of God. He wept, who needed not tears as do we.

But there is a peculiarity in all Christian sorrow, such as this which has called us into the house of God to-day. It is, that looking up to Him who has put death and sorrow forever under His feet, and

putting our trust in Him, we kneel at His footstool and in the midst of our tears and warfare, sing the song of victory.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;"—blessed *when* He gave, blessed *when* He took away—blessed *for what* He gave blessed *for what* He hath taken away.

With all our thoughts of the wife, sister and friend who has left us, mingle thoughts of God. We see His hand. We see Him in the life that is ended. We see Him in its quiet and happy ending. He has gathered us together into his house, that, here where we are wont to meet Him, we may witness one more manifestation of His power, and one more exhibition of His surpassing grace. And as we bow in the spirit of submission, without one murmur at the exercise of His will, He would have us enjoy, with Him, the triumph in which He rejoices, that one more of His trusting followers, kept by the power of God, through life and in death, has entered into His rest. Let us chasten and beautify our sorrow with thanksgiving—thanksgiving for what she was to us, and to Christ; and for what she now is to Christ and to us.

As I recall the life that has now ceased among us, I shall not describe for you a perfect character. It is not given any of earth to be sinless. I shall let memory and affection speak of one who clung to the cross of Christ; and who, if she was ever conscious

of any personal goodness and worth, hasted to give all the glory of it to her Saviour. The things I mention are the things which have most deeply impressed me during the seventeen years of my acquaintance with her.

The strength and tenderness of her affections greatly impressed me. In this respect she was richly endowed. In that closest of all bonds, her love never knew change nor doubt nor decay. In the wide circle of family ties her heart went forth, with unfaltering affection, to every one. Distance severed no bonds. Absence changed none of her impulses. Loving thought and tender prayer followed the members of the broken household as they went to distant parts of the land, and held them in memory to the last. She found her purest pleasure in discharging, with an admirable fidelity and unabating affection, the duties of home and to her kindred. And beyond these she went forth in an unswerving friendship to others, who had no claims of blood upon her. Her social qualities made her presence welcome everywhere; but they were most attractive amid the cordial and happy hospitalities of her own home. The first nineteen months of my ministry here, were spent in that home; and her unceasing kindnesses, and constant efforts for my comfort and happiness, her self-forgetfulness, challenged a tender regard, surpassed only by that for my own mother.

These natural affections were all moulded and

sanctified by a sincere and tender religious concern for the objects of her love. So far as temporal comforts are concerned, her life has been throughout singularly even and free from trials. Few trials met her. Few disappointments troubled her. A happy home and beloved friends, social and religious pleasures, encompassed her. The only unhappiness that ever seemed to meet her, was in her deep anxiety for the religious welfare, especially of the younger members of the families closely related to her. Her concern continued, and was beautifully manifested during the closing days of her life. No worldly advantages or preferments, no temporal prosperity, could compensate for the lack of a good religious hope, or for the absence of religious privileges and influences. Deeper than all things else in her heart, lay a large and tender concern for their spiritual welfare.

Another trait in her character was conscientiousness in the discharge of duty. Years ago, when she was actively engaged as a teacher in the Sunday School, (extending over a period of twenty-four consecutive years,) her preparations for her class were made in the most careful and faithful manner. A large part of her leisure time throughout the week was spent in the study of the lesson; in carefully writing out her thoughts and questions and illustrations upon it. This conscientiousness was carried out into all the relations of life. It governed her attendance upon the sanctuary. It moulded her re-

lations to social usages and customs. It regulated her intercourse with all. If it made her seem exacting upon the carelessness and freedom of others, yet the beautiful consistency of her own life secured for it a ready forgiveness, and the meed of hearty praise.

Her love of the fitting and beautiful, in conduct and character, was accompanied with a deep love and choice taste for the beautiful in nature and in art. Her home was made attractive within and without, with flowers and paintings and objects to gratify and cultivate a pure taste. No gift from friends called forth warmer thanks or wakened a deeper pleasure than that of a few simple flowers. Her nature was open to these kindly influences. Nor was it the possession of these gave her pleasure, so much as the simple sight of them. There was no selfishness in her joy. Her last illness was greatly cheered and comforted by occasional gifts of flowers, that quickened all the powers of enjoyment, and drew out a profusion of gratefulness. That home will miss the delicate eye and the loving taste that have so refined and beautified it.

Her attachment to this Church was perhaps not a singular virtue; for we have had occasion to note the strength of this love in many of the aged members of the Church, who have been passing from us.

Mrs. Weir was born at Harrisburg, Dec. 21, 1799. She united with this Church, by letter, on the 7th of

August, 1829; and at the date of her death, Feb. 12, 1872, had been a member of it for forty-two and a half years. Through all the changes and vicissitudes of these years, the days of depression and discouragement, the days of revival and of joy, she accompanied it with unabated love, seeking its peace, praying for its welfare, laboring for its prosperity. It is no little legacy to leave a Church—this memory and record of more than forty years of toil and love and prayers. Her character and life were brought under the control of deep and settled religious convictions at an early period. She believed the Gospel of the grace of God. She acknowledged its inward power. I am not aware that she ever wavered in her faith in the Gospel. Her nature was not a distrustful one. While her christian trust seemed never to be exultant or very hopeful, this lack grew chiefly out of a distrust of her own experiences. Her faith in the Lord Jesus, and her reception of Christian doctrine, were strong and cordial. Her acceptance of evangelical truth was sincere and child-like. As her pastor for so many years, I may be allowed to say, from her frequent and hearty reference to sermons, that she was ever especially fond of those discourses that were most thoroughly spiritual and practical in their character; and that by deed, and many a kind word, she gave me a uniform support and encouragement. She was an attentive and loving hearer of the Gospel, and just such a kind and friendly critic of sermons as a despondent pastor often wants.

It was not in any manifestation of remarkable traits of character that she won the love of those around her, or evinced how deep and true was the work of divine grace in her own spirit. It was rather by a happy combination of well-balanced qualities, which gave completeness and symmetry to the whole character. Her life was not an agitating one. Home and Church and friendships filled it to the full. It asked no stimulus from the world beyond. And grace wrought in that same quiet sphere and won its life-long victories amid the unnoticed things of such a life. It had its infirmities and temptations; but these only link it more closely to our own lives, and make the memory of it the more precious to us.

And many precious things will a loving memory gather up from the life that has ceased among us; but of them all there will be none so dear as those signals of the grace of her Saviour appearing in all her life; showing us how He was keeping her feet in the narrow way, and leading her on to the victory of all faithful souls.

And this is our thanksgiving in the sorrow of this hour, that we look on the face of the beloved dead in the full assurance, that Christ in her, has had one more triumph over all the bonds of death, over all the dominion of sin, and all the power of the enemy. His blood has availed for one more, and cleansed one more, weak but trusting believer. Christ has piloted one more saint safely through the storms of life, and

lifted one more chosen and redeemed child to everlasting glory. We praise Christ amid our sorrows. We praise Him for the memory of a faithful and loving life. We praise Him for what He gave us in her for so many years—for the true and tender affections of her nature, for her long-continued friendships, for the ten thousand acts of courtesy and goodness she wrought, for the many years of holy wedded love she lived, for all the cheerful light and warmth of her earthly home, for all the happy influences that have flowed from her life and character. We praise Him for early subduing that life to Himself, bringing it within his kingdom of grace, and giving his Church the benefit of it for nearly a half century. The past is full of causes of thankfulness, when we recall how much this one life has done to bless it—in the Home, the Church, and Society. Let us not think, when beloved ones leave us, of what we have lost, but of what we have had so long—and still have in the treasures of memory and the abiding influences of their lives. We praise Christ out of our sorrow for one more life perfected. It was His delight, when He was living His days of sorrow, to receive the tender ministrations of loving and faithful women! How many hours of weariness they comforted! How many moments of suffering and persecution did they alleviate for Him. And so has it been in His Church ever since—so has it been among us—the ministrations of loving, devoted earnest women have been given to

Christ and been accepted of Him. The long succession ceases not. One by one the members of this ministering band have been leaving us, some with exulting, some with a quiet departure—some uttering their words of joy as they passed the gates of death; others only returning the pressure of the hand or opening the eyes before they closed them forever; but all of them from the midst of Jordan waving back to us the signals of safety. It has been sublime to see the sick at rest, while all who watched around them, were in trouble; to see strength and peace and calmness on the dying face—not a tear on the cheek, not a shadow on the brow while the living wept and prayed.

God is giving us wonderful lessons in these swiftly succeeding bereavements. He is proclaiming the value of a Christian hope. He is demonstrating his own fidelity to his redeemed children. Christ walks among his Churches, and enjoys these triumphs of his grace. He is summoning the living to faithfulness. He is teaching us that wherever we are, whether in life or death, in grace or in glory, He would have each of us turn from all things, and all beings else, to Him. He would have us all and each be strong in Him—bear our burdens and be faithful in Him, do all our weeping and our rejoicing alike in Him. He is teaching us that there is no helper, no comforter for us but Himself. He comes close to us, that we may see Him and flee to Him—He comes in

sorrows, that the sacred whisper of His word may fall into our hearts, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble." He is bidding us turn from sin to Him, from frailty and feebleness to Him, from trouble and sorrow to Him, from self and man and the world and all things to Him. I know no comfort for the sorrowing, like God—the reconciled God in Christ. We may trust all to Him.

"When over dizzy steeps we go,
One soft hand blinds our eyes;
The other leads us safe and slow—
O love of God most wise.

And though we turn us from his face,
And wander wide and long;
He holds us still in His embrace—
O love of God most strong."

May the great Saviour who has helped another fearing but loving disciple to the end, help each of us to finish our course and keep the faith. Some of us too, are surely nearing the end. The days are few before we also shall see God face to face. In that hour we shall need the garments of Christ's salvation and the robe of his righteousness. The heaven we hope for is the purchase of His precious blood, and to it we shall come, if by the Grace of God we reach it, without one claim or plea, one act of merit on which we shall dare to look.

After prayer, the following hymn was sung by the the choir and congregation:

Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep,
From which none ever wakes to weep!
A calm and undisturbed repose
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Asleep in Jesus! Oh! how sweet
To be for such a slumber meet!
With holy confidence to sing,
That death has lost his venomed sting.

Asleep in Jesus! peaceful rest
Whose waking is supremely blest;
No fear, no woe shall dim that hour,
Which manifests the Saviour's power.

Asleep in Jesus! Oh! for me
May such a blissful refuge be!
Securely shall my ashes lie,
And wait the summons from on high.

BENEDICTION.

Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.

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